

## CLAIMS

We claim:

- 1        1. A method of designating candidate objects with respect to an initial object in a  
2 virtual environment of an information processing system, comprising:
  - 3            displaying one or more candidate objects on a display screen;
  - 4            displaying a candidate range indicator on the display screen in response to actuation  
5 of a candidate input interface on an input device, the candidate range indicator comprising a  
6 visual indication of a candidate range for the initial object;
  - 7            displaying a visual indication in association with a first candidate object in response  
8 to the first candidate object intersecting at least a portion of the candidate range indicator on  
9 the display screen, the visual indication being associated with a first designation input  
10 interface on the input device; and
  - 11          causing a predetermined action from the initial object with respect to the candidate  
12 object in response to actuation of the first designation input interface.

- 1        2. The method of claim 1, wherein the information processing system provides a  
2 game environment, the initial object comprises a player object, each candidate object  
3 comprises an enemy character in the game environment, the candidate range indicator  
4 comprises a target range indicator, the first designation input interface comprises a first attack

5       input interface and the candidate input interface comprises a target input interface, and  
6       wherein causing a predetermined action from the initial object with respect to the candidate  
7       object comprises causing the player object to attack a first enemy character.

1           3.       The method of claim 2, additionally comprising displaying the player object  
2       on the display screen and wherein the target range indicator comprises a bounded area that  
3       extends radially outward from the player object, the bounded area encompassing a  
4       predetermined region of the display screen.

1           4.       The method of claim 3, wherein the player object can be equipped with a  
2       weapon and wherein the size of the bounded area is a function of the weapon with which the  
3       player object is equipped.

1           5.       The method of claim 3, wherein the target input interface on the input device  
2       comprises a joystick that can be in a neutral position or a non-neutral position, and wherein  
3       actuation of the target input interface comprises the joystick being moved out of the neutral  
4       position in a first direction.

1           6.       The method of claim 5, wherein displaying a target range indicator on the  
2       display screen comprises displaying the target range indicator such that the target range

3 indicator extends radially outward from the player object in a direction that corresponds to  
4 the first direction in which the joystick was moved.

1           7. The method of claim 5, wherein displaying a visual indication in association  
2 with the first enemy character comprises displaying a first attack icon adjacent to a first  
3 enemy character in response to the first enemy character intersecting at least a portion of the  
4 target range indicator on the display screen, the attack icon being associated with a first  
5 attack input interface on the input device.

1           8. The method of claim 7, additionally comprising displaying a second attack  
2 icon over a second enemy character in response to the second enemy character intersecting  
3 the target range indicator, the second attack icon being associated with the second attack  
4 input interface on the input device.

1           9. The method of claim 2, additionally comprising causing the player object to  
2 attack the second enemy character in response to actuation of the second attack input  
3 interface.

1           10. The method of claim 2, wherein the player object can face in a direction  
2 toward or away from the first enemy character, and additionally comprising causing the

3 player object to attack the first enemy character in response to actuation of the first attack  
4 input interface even when the player object is facing in a direction away from the first enemy  
5 character.

1           11. The method of claim 10, wherein the player object is facing away from the  
2 first enemy character when the first attack input interface is actuated, and additionally  
3 comprising causing the player object to remain facing in a direction away from the first  
4 enemy character while the player object is attacking the first enemy character.

1           12. The method of claim 10, additionally comprising causing the player object to  
2 face in a direction toward the first enemy character after the player object attacks the first  
3 enemy character.

1           13. The method of claim 2, additionally comprising displaying the first attack icon  
2 over a second enemy character in response to the second enemy character intersecting the  
3 target range indicator on the screen display while the first enemy character is also intersecting  
4 the target range indicator on the screen display.

1           14. The method of claim 13, additionally comprising causing the player object to  
2 attack both the first and second enemy characters in response to actuation of the first attack  
3 input interface.

1           15. A method of causing a player object to target and attack one or more enemy  
2 objects in a virtual environment of an information processing system, comprising:

3           displaying a target range indicator that defines the target range of the player object,  
4 the target range indicator comprising a bounded area that encompasses a region of a display  
5 screen;

6           maneuvering a first enemy object so that the first enemy object is at least partially  
7 located within the region of the display screen that is encompassed by the bounded area of  
8 the target range indicator;

9           associating the first enemy object with a first button on an input device according to a  
10 button hierarchy, the button hierarchy prioritizing plural buttons on the input device in a  
11 predetermined priority order wherein the first button is the first button in the priority order;

12           maneuvering a second enemy object so that the second enemy object is at least  
13 partially located within the region of the display screen that is encompassed by the bounded  
14 area of the target range indicator;

15 associating the second enemy object with a second button on the input device  
16 according to the button hierarchy, wherein the second button is the next button in the priority  
17 order after the first button;

18 causing the player object to attack an enemy object when the button associated with  
19 the enemy object is pressed.

1 16. The method of claim 15, additionally comprising displaying the player object  
2 on the display screen.

1 17. The method of claim 14, wherein the target range indicator extends radially  
2 outward from the player object on the display screen.

1 18. The method of claim 15, additionally comprising displaying an attack icon  
2 over an enemy object when the enemy object is associated with a controller button, the attack  
3 icon comprising a symbol that identifies the associated controller button.

1 19. The method of claim 15, wherein the player object faces a particular direction,  
2 and additionally comprising causing the player object to attack an enemy object when the  
3 button associated with the enemy object is pressed regardless of whether the player object is  
4 facing the enemy object being attacked.

1           20. The method of claim 15, additionally comprising equipping the player object  
2       with a weapon, wherein the size of the region of the display screen encompassed by the  
3       bounded area of the target range indicator is dependent on the weapon.

1           21. The method of claim 15, wherein the target range indicator is displayed in  
2       response to moving a joystick on the input device in a first direction and wherein the target  
3       range indicator extends in a direction that corresponds to the first direction that the joystick  
4       was moved.

1           22. A recording medium that stores a program readable and executable by an  
2       information processing system to cause the information processing system to designate  
3       candidate objects with respect to an initial object in a virtual environment of the information  
4       processing system, the program including instructions for causing the information processing  
5       system to execute:

6           a first process comprising displaying one or more candidate objects on a display  
7       screen;

8           a second process comprising displaying a candidate range indicator on the display  
9       screen in response to actuation of a candidate input interface on an input device, the  
10      candidate indicator comprising a visual indication of a candidate range for the initial object;

11           a third process comprising displaying a visual indication in association with a first  
12 candidate object in response to the first candidate object intersecting at least a portion of the  
13 candidate range indicator on the display screen, the visual indication being associated with a  
14 first designation input interface on the input device;

15           a fourth process comprising causing a predetermined action from the initial object  
16 with respect to the first candidate object in response to actuation of the first designation input  
17 interface.

1           23. The recording medium of claim 22, wherein the virtual environment  
2 comprises a game environment, initial object comprises a player object, each candidate object  
3 comprises an enemy character, the candidate range indicator comprises a target range  
4 indicator, the first designation input interface comprises a first attack input interface and the  
5 candidate input interface comprises a target input interface, and wherein causing a  
6 predetermined action from the initial object with respect to the candidate object comprises  
7 causing the player object to attack a first enemy character.

1           24. The recording medium of claim 23, wherein the first process additionally  
2 comprises displaying the player object on the display screen and wherein the target range  
3 indicator comprises a bounded area that extends radially outward from the player object, the  
4 bounded area encompassing a predetermined region of the display screen.

1           25. The recording medium of claim 24, wherein the player object can be equipped  
2 with a weapon and wherein the size of the bounded area is a function of the weapon with  
3 which the player object is equipped.

1           26. The recording medium of claim 24, wherein the target input interface on the  
2 input device comprises a joystick that can be in a neutral position or a non-neutral position,  
3 and wherein actuation of the target input interface comprises the joystick being moved out of  
4 the neutral position in a first direction.

1           27. The recording medium of claim 26, wherein the second process comprises  
2 displaying the target range indicator such that the target range indicator extends radially  
3 outward from the player object in a direction that corresponds to the first direction in which  
4 the joystick was moved.

1           28. The recording medium of claim 26, wherein displaying a visual indication in  
2 association with the first enemy character comprises displaying a first attack icon adjacent to  
3 a first enemy character in response to the first enemy character intersecting at least a portion  
4 of the target range indicator on the display screen, the attack icon being associated with a first  
5 attack input interface on the input device.

1           29. The recording medium of claim 28, wherein the program further includes  
2 instructions for causing the information processing system to execute a process comprised of  
3 displaying a second attack icon over a second enemy character in response to the second  
4 enemy character intersecting the target range indicator, the second attack icon being  
5 associated with a second attack input interface on the input device.

1           30. The recording medium of claim 23, the program further including instructions  
2 for causing the information processing system to execute a process comprised of causing the  
3 player object to attack the second enemy character in response to actuation of the second  
4 attack input interface.

1           31. The recording medium of claim 23, wherein the player object can face in a  
2 direction toward or away from the first enemy character, and the program further including  
3 instructions for causing the information processing system to execute a process comprised of  
4 causing the player object to attack the first enemy character in response to actuation of the  
5 first attack input interface even when the player object is facing in a direction away from the  
6 first enemy character.

1           32. The recording medium of claim 23, wherein the player object is facing away  
2 from the first enemy character when the first attack input interface is actuated, and the  
3 program further including instructions for causing the information processing system to

4 execute a process comprised of causing the player object to remain facing in a direction away  
5 from the first enemy character while the player object is attacking the first enemy character.

1           33. The recording medium of claim 31, the program further including instructions  
2 for causing the information processing system to execute a process comprised of causing the  
3 player object to face in a direction toward the first enemy character after the player object  
4 attacks the first enemy character.

1           34. The recording medium of claim 33, the program further including instructions  
2 for causing the information processing system to execute a process comprised of displaying  
3 the first attack icon over a second enemy character in response to the second enemy character  
4 intersecting the target range indicator on the display screen while the first enemy character is  
5 also intersecting the target range indicator on the display screen.

1           35. The recording medium of claim 34, the program further including instructions  
2 for causing the information processing system to execute a process comprised of causing the  
3 player object to attack both the first and second enemy characters in response to actuation of  
4 the first attack input interface.

1           36. A recording medium that stores a program readable and executable by an  
2 information processing system to cause the information processing system to target one or  
3 more enemy objects for attack with respect to a player object in a virtual environment of the  
4 information processing system, the program including instructions for causing the  
5 information processing system to execute:

6           a first process comprised of displaying a target range indicator that defines the target  
7 range of the player object, the target range indicator comprising a bounded area that  
8 encompasses a region of a display screen;

9           a second process comprised of maneuvering a first enemy object so that the first  
10 enemy object is at least partially located within the region of the display screen that is  
11 encompassed by the bounded area of the target range indicator;

12          a third process comprised of associating the first enemy object with a first button on  
13 an input device according to a button hierarchy, the button hierarchy prioritizing plural  
14 buttons on the input device in a predetermined priority order wherein the first button is the  
15 first button in the priority order;

16          a fourth process comprised of maneuvering a second enemy object so that the second  
17 enemy object is at least partially located within the region of the display screen that is  
18 encompassed by the bounded area of the target range indicator;

19           a fifth process comprised of associating the second enemy object with a second button  
20       on the input device according to the button hierarchy, wherein the second button is the next  
21       button in the priority order after the first button;

22           a sixth process comprised of causing the player object to attack an enemy object when  
23       the button associated with the enemy object is pressed.

1           37.     The recording medium of claim 36, the program further including instructions  
2       for causing the information processing system to execute a process comprised of displaying  
3       the player object on the display screen.

1           38.     The recording medium of claim 37, wherein the target range indicator extends  
2       radially outward from the player object on the display screen.

1           39.     The recording medium of claim 36, the program further including instructions  
2       for causing the information processing system to execute a process comprised of displaying  
3       an attack icon over an enemy object when the enemy object is associated with a controller  
4       button, the attack icon comprising a symbol that identifies the associated controller button.

1           40.     The recording medium of claim 36, wherein the player object faces a  
2       particular direction, the program further including instructions for causing the information

3 processing system to execute a process comprised of causing the player object to attack an  
4 enemy object when the button associated with the enemy object is pressed regardless of  
5 whether the player object is facing the enemy object being attacked.

1           41. The recording medium of claim 36, the program further including instructions  
2 for causing the information processing system to execute a process comprised of equipping  
3 the player object with a weapon, wherein the size of the region of the display screen  
4 encompassed by the bounded area of the target range indicator is dependent on the weapon.

1           42. The recording medium of claim 36, wherein the target range indicator is  
2 displayed in response to moving a joystick on the input device in a first direction and wherein  
3 the target range indicator extends in a direction that corresponds to the first direction that the  
4 joystick was moved.

1           43. An information processing system comprised of an information processor  
2 configured to execute program instructions that cause the information processing system to  
3 implement one or more processes for designating candidate objects with respect to an initial  
4 object in a virtual environment of the information processing system, the processes  
5 comprising:

6           a first process comprising displaying one or more candidate objects on a display  
7       screen;

8           a second process comprising displaying a candidate range indicator on the display  
9       screen in response to actuation of a candidate input interface on an input device, the  
10      candidate indicator comprising a visual indication of a candidate range for the initial object;

11          a third process comprising displaying a visual indication in association with a first  
12      candidate object in response to the first candidate object intersecting at least a portion of the  
13      candidate range indicator on the display screen, the visual indication being associated with a  
14      first designation input interface on the input device;

15          a fourth process comprising a predetermined action from the initial object with  
16      respect to the first candidate object in response to actuation of the first designation input  
17      interface.

1           44.     The information processing system of claim 43, wherein the virtual  
2       environment comprises a game environment, the initial object comprises a player object, each  
3       candidate object comprises an enemy character, the candidate range indicator comprises a  
4       target range indicator, the first designation input interface comprises a first attack input  
5       interface and the candidate input interface comprises a target input interface, and wherein  
6       causing a predetermined action from the initial object with respect to the candidate object  
7       comprises causing the player object to attack a first enemy character.

1           45. The information processing system of claim 43, wherein the first process  
2        additionally comprises displaying the player object on the display screen and wherein the  
3        target range indicator comprises a bounded area that extends radially outward from the player  
4        object, the bounded area encompassing a predetermined region of the display screen.

1           46. The information processing system of claim 45, wherein the player object can  
2        be equipped with a weapon and wherein the size of the bounded area is a function of the  
3        weapon with which the player object is equipped.

1           47. The information processing system of claim 45, wherein the target input  
2        interface on the input device comprises a joystick that can be in a neutral position or a non-  
3        neutral position, and wherein actuation of the target input interface comprises the joystick  
4        being moved out of the neutral position in a first direction.

1           48. The information processing system of claim 47, wherein the second process  
2        comprises displaying the target range indicator such that the target range indicator extends  
3        radially outward from the player object in a direction that corresponds to the first direction in  
4        which the joystick was moved.

1           49. The information processing system of claim 47, wherein displaying a visual  
2 indication in association with the first enemy character comprises displaying a first attack  
3 icon adjacent to a first enemy character in response to the first enemy character intersecting at  
4 least a portion of the target range indicator on the display screen, the attack icon being  
5 associated with a first attack input interface on the input device.

1           50. The information processing system of claim 49, wherein the processes further  
2 include a process comprised of displaying a second attack icon over a second enemy object  
3 in response to the second enemy object intersecting the target range indicator, the second  
4 attack icon being associated with a second attack input interface on the input device.

1           51. The information processing system of claim 44, wherein the processes further  
2 include a process comprised of causing the player object to attack the second enemy  
3 character in response to actuation of the second attack input interface.

1           52. The information processing system of claim 44, wherein the player object can  
2 face in a direction toward or away from the first enemy character, and wherein the processes  
3 further include a process comprised of causing the player object to attack the first enemy  
4 character in response to actuation of the first attack input interface even when the player  
5 object is facing in a direction away from the first enemy character.

1           53. The information processing system of claim 45, wherein the player object is  
2 facing away from the first enemy character when the first attack input interface is actuated,  
3 and wherein the processes further include a process comprised of causing the player object to  
4 remain facing in a direction away from the first enemy character while the player object is  
5 attacking the first enemy character.

1           54. The information processing system of claim 52, wherein the processes further  
2 include a process comprised of causing the player object to face in a direction toward the first  
3 enemy character after the player object attacks the first enemy character.

1           55. The information processing system of claim 54, wherein the processes further  
2 include a process comprised of displaying the first attack icon over a second enemy character  
3 in response to the second enemy character intersecting the target range indicator on the  
4 display screen while the first enemy character is also intersecting the target range indicator on  
5 the display screen.

1           56. The information processing system of claim 55, wherein the processes further  
2 include a process comprised of causing the player object to attack both the first and second  
3 enemy characters in response to actuation of the first attack input interface.

1           57. An information processing system comprised of an information processor  
2 configured to execute program instructions that cause the information processing system to  
3 implement one or more processes for targeting one or more enemy objects for attack with  
4 respect to a player object in a virtual environment of the information processing system, the  
5 process comprising:

6           a first process that causes display of a target range indicator that defines the target  
7 range of the player object, the target range indicator comprising a bounded area that  
8 encompasses a region of a display screen;

9           a second process that permits a first enemy object to be moved so that the first enemy  
10 object is at least partially located within the region of the display screen that is encompassed  
11 by the bounded area of the target range indicator;

12          a third process that associates the first enemy object with a first button on an input  
13 device according to a button hierarchy, the button hierarchy prioritizing plural buttons on the  
14 input device in a predetermined priority order wherein the first button is the first button in the  
15 priority order;

16          a fourth process that maneuvers a second enemy object so that the second enemy  
17 object is at least partially located within the region of the display screen that is encompassed  
18 by the bounded area of the target range indicator;

19           a fifth process that associates the second enemy object with a second button on the  
20       input device according to the button hierarchy, wherein the second button is the next button  
21       in the priority order after the first button;

22           a sixth process that causes the player object to attack an enemy object when the  
23       button associated with the enemy object is pressed.

1           58.     The information processing system of claim 57, wherein the processes further  
2       include a process comprised of displaying the player object on the display screen.

1           59.     The information processing system of claim 58, wherein the target range  
2       indicator extends radially outward from the player object on the display screen.

1           60.     The information processing system of claim 57, wherein the processes further  
2       include a process comprised of displaying an attack icon over an enemy object when the  
3       enemy object is associated with a controller button, the attack icon comprising a symbol that  
4       identifies the associated controller button.

1           61.     The information processing system of claim 57, wherein the player object  
2       faces a particular direction, and wherein the processes further include a process comprised of  
3       causing the player object to attack an enemy object when the button associated with the

4 enemy object is pressed regardless of whether the player object is facing the enemy object  
5 being attacked.

1           62. The information processing system of claim 57, wherein the processes further  
2 include a process comprised of equipping the player object with a weapon, wherein the size  
3 of the region of the display screen encompassed by the bounded area of the target range  
4 indicator is dependent on the weapon.

1           63. The information processing system of claim 57, wherein the target range  
2 indicator is displayed in response to moving a joystick on the input device in a first direction  
3 and wherein the target range indicator extends in a direction that corresponds to the first  
4 direction that the joystick was moved.